

# Leo Strauss

## Note on the Plan of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*

- [1] *Beyond Good and Evil* always seemed to me to be the most beautiful of Nietzsche's books. This impression could be thought to be contradicted by his judgement, for he was inclined to believe that his *Zarathustra* is the most profound book that exists in German as well as the most perfect in regard to language. But "most beautiful" is not the same as "most profound" and even as "most perfect in regard to language." To illustrate this partly by an example which is perhaps not too far-fetched, there seems to be general agreement to the effect that Plato's *Republic*, his *Phaedrus* and his *Banquet* are his most beautiful writings without their being necessarily his most profound writings. Yet Plato makes no distinction among his writings in regard to profundity or beauty or perfection in regard to language; he is not concerned with Plato—with his "ipsissimosity"—and hence with Plato's writings, but points away from himself whereas Nietzsche points most emphatically to himself, to "Mr. Nietzsche." Now Nietzsche "personally" preferred, not *Beyond Good and Evil* but his *Dawn of Morning* and his *Gay Science* to all his other books precisely because these two books are his "most personal" books (letter to Karl Knortz of June 21, 1888). As the very term "personal," ultimately derivative from the Greek word for "face," indicates, being "personal" has nothing to do with being "profound" or with being "perfect in regard to language."
- [2] What is dimly perceived and inadequately expressed through our judgement on *Beyond Good and Evil*, is stated clearly by Nietzsche in his account of that book which he has given in *Ecce Homo: Beyond Good and Evil* is the very opposite of the "inspired" and "dithyrambic" *Zarathustra* in as much as

*Zarathustra* is most far-sighted, whereas in *Beyond Good and Evil* the eye is compelled to grasp clearly the nearest, the timely (the present), the around-us. This change of concern required in every respect, "above all also in the form," the same arbitrary turning away from the instincts out of which a *Zarathustra* had become possible: the graceful subtlety as regards form, as regards intention, as regards the art of silence are in the foreground in *Beyond Good and Evil* which amounts to saying that these qualities are not in the foreground in the *Zarathustra*, to say nothing of Nietzsche's other books.

- [3] In other words, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, in the only book published by Nietzsche, in the contemporary preface to which he presents himself as the antagonist of Plato, he "platonizes" as regards the "form" more than anywhere else.
- [4] According to the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* Plato's fundamental error was his invention of the pure mind and of the good in itself. From this premise one can easily be led to Diotima's conclusion that no human being is wise, but only the god is; human beings can only strive for wisdom or philosophize; gods do not philosophize (*Banquet* 203e–204a). In the penultimate aphorism of *Beyond Good and Evil* in which Nietzsche delineates "the genius of the heart"—a super-Socrates who is in fact the god Dionysos—Nietzsche divulges after the proper preparation the novelty, suspect perhaps especially among philosophers, that gods too philosophize. Yet Diotima is not Socrates nor Plato, and Plato could well have thought that gods philosophize (cf. *Sophist* 216b5–6, *Theaetetus* 151d 1–2). And when in the ultimate aphorism of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche underlines the fundamental difference between "written and painted thoughts" and thoughts in their original form, we cannot help being reminded of what Plato says or intimates regarding the "weakness of the *logos*" and regarding the unsayable and a fortiori unwritable character of the truth (*Ep.* VII 341c–d, 342e–343a): the purity of the mind as Plato conceives of it, does not necessarily establish the strength of the *logos*.
- [5] *Beyond Good and Evil* has the subtitle "Prelude to a philosophy of the future." The book is meant to prepare, not indeed the philosophy of the future, the true philosophy, but a new kind of philosophy by liberating the mind from "the prejudice of the philosophers," i.e. of the philosophers of the past (and the present). At the same time or by this very fact the book is meant to be a specimen of the philosophy of the future. The first chapter ("Of the prejudices of the philosophers") is followed by a chapter entitled "The free mind." The free minds in Nietzsche's sense are free from the prejudice of the philosophy of the past but they are not yet philosophers of the future; they are the heralds and precursors of the philosophy of the future (aph. 44). It is hard to say how the distinction between the free minds and the philosophers of the future is to be understood: are the free minds by

any chance freer than the philosophers of the future? do they possess an openness which is possible only during the transitional period between the philosophy of the past and the philosophy of the future? Be this as it may, philosophy is surely the primary theme of *Beyond Good and Evil*, the obvious theme of the first two chapters.

- [6] The book consists of nine chapters. The third chapter is devoted to religion. The heading of the fourth chapter ("Sayings and Interludes") does not indicate a subject matter; that chapter is distinguished from all other chapters by the fact that it consists exclusively of short aphorisms. The last five chapters are devoted to morals and politics. The book as a whole consists then of two main parts which are separated from one another by about 123 "Sayings and Interludes"; the first of the two parts is devoted chiefly to philosophy and religion and the second chiefly to morals and politics. Philosophy and religion, it seems, belong together—belong more closely together than philosophy and the city. (Cf. Hegel's distinction between the absolute and the objective mind.) The fundamental alternative is that of the rule of philosophy over religion or the rule of religion over philosophy; it is not, as it was for Plato or Aristotle, that of the philosophic and the political life; for Nietzsche, as distinguished from the classics, politics belongs from the outset to a lower plane than either philosophy or religion. In the preface he intimates that his precursor par excellence is not a statesman nor even a philosopher but the *homo religiosus* Pascal (cf. aph. 45).
- [7] Nietzsche says very little about religion in the first two chapters. One could say that he speaks there on religion only in a single aphorism which happens to be the shortest (37). That aphorism is a kind of corollary to the immediately preceding one in which he sets forth in the most straightforward and unambiguous manner that is compatible with his intention, the particular character of his fundamental proposition according to which life is will to power or seen from within the world is will to power and nothing else. The will to power takes the place which the *eros*—the striving for "the good in itself"—occupies in Plato's thought. But the *eros* is not "the pure mind" (*der reine Geist*). Whatever may be the relation between the *eros* and the pure mind according to Plato, in Nietzsche's thought the will to power takes the place of both *eros* and the pure mind. Accordingly philosophizing becomes a mode or modification of the will to power: it is the most spiritual (*der geistigste*) will to power; it consists in prescribing to nature what or how it ought to be (aph. 9); it is not love of the true that is independent of will or decision. Whereas according to Plato the pure mind grasps the truth, according to Nietzsche the impure mind, or a certain kind of impure mind, is the sole source of truth. Nietzsche begins therefore *Beyond Good and Evil* with the questioning of love of truth and of truth. If we may make a somewhat free use of an expression occurring in Nietzsche's *Second Medita-*

*tion Out of Season*, the truth is not attractive, lovable, life-giving, but deadly, as is shown by the true doctrines of the sovereignty of Becoming, of the fluidity of all concepts, types and species, and of the lack of any cardinal difference between man and beast (*Werke*, ed Schlechta, I 272); it is shown most simply by the true doctrine that God is dead. The world in itself, the "thing-in-itself," "nature" (aph. 9) is wholly chaotic and meaningless. Hence all meaning, all order originates in man, in man's creative acts, in his will to power. Nietzsche's statements or suggestions are deliberately enigmatic (aph. 40). By suggesting or saying that the truth is deadly, he does his best to break the power of the deadly truth; he suggests that the most important, the most comprehensive truth—the truth regarding all truths—is life-giving. In other words, by suggesting that the truth is human creation, he suggests that this truth at any rate is not a human creation. One is tempted to say that Nietzsche's pure mind grasps the fact that the impure mind creates perishable truths. Resisting that temptation we state Nietzsche's suggestion following him in this manner: the philosophers tried to get hold of the "text" as distinguished from "interpretations"; they tried to "discover" and not to "invent." What Nietzsche claims to have realized is that the text in its pure, unfalsified form is inaccessible (like the Kantian Thing-in-itself); everything thought by anyone—philosopher or man of the people—is in the last analysis interpretation. But for this very reason the text, the world in itself, the true world cannot be of any concern to us; the world of any concern to us is necessarily a fiction, for it is necessarily anthropocentric; man is necessarily in a manner the measure of all things (aph. 3 end, 12 end, 17, 22, 24, 34, 38; cf. Plato, *Laws* 716c 4–6). As is indicated sufficiently by the title of the book, the anthropocentrism for which Nietzsche opts is transmoral (cf. aph. 34 and 35 with 32). At first glance there does not seem to be a connection between the grave aphorism 34 and the lighthearted aphorism 35 and this seems to agree with the general impression according to which a book of aphorisms does not have or need not have a lucid and necessary order or may consist of disconnected pieces. The connection between aphorism 34 and 35 is a particularly striking example of the lucid, if somewhat hidden, order governing the sequence of the aphorisms: the desultory character of Nietzsche's argument is more pretended than real. If the aforesaid is correct, the doctrine of the will to power cannot claim to reveal what is, the fact, the most fundamental fact but is "only" one interpretation, presumably the best interpretation, among many. Nietzsche regards this apparent objection as a confirmation of his proposition (aph. 22 end).

- [8] We can now turn to the two aphorisms in *Beyond Good and Evil* I–II that can be said to be devoted to religion (36–37). Aphorism 36 presents the reasoning in support of the doctrine of the will to power. Nietzsche had spoken of the will to power before, but only in the way of bald assertion, not to say dogmatically. Now he sets forth with what is at the same time the most

intransigent intellectual probity and the most bewitching playfulness his reasons, i.e. the problematic, tentative, tempting, hypothetical character of his proposition. It could seem that he does not know more of the will to power as the fundamental reality than what he says here. Almost immediately before, in the central aphorism of the second chapter (34), he had drawn our attention to the fundamental distinction between the world which is of any concern to us and the world in itself, or between the world of appearance or fiction (the interpretations) and the true world (the text). What he seems to aim at is the abolition of that fundamental distinction the world as will to power is both the world of any concern to us and the world in itself. Precisely if all views of the world are interpretations, i.e. acts of the will to power, the doctrine of the will to power is at the same time an interpretation and the most fundamental fact, for, in contradistinction to all other interpretations, it is the necessary and sufficient condition of the possibility of any "categories."

- [9] After having tempted some of his readers (cf. aph. 30) with the doctrine of the will to power Nietzsche makes them raise the question as to whether that doctrine does not assert, to speak popularly, that God is refuted but the devil is not. He replies "On the contrary! On the contrary, my friends! And, to the devil, what forces you to speak popularly?" The doctrine of the will to power—the whole doctrine of *Beyond Good and Evil*—is in a manner a vindication of God. (Cf. aph. 150 and 295, as well as *Genealogy of Morals*, Preface Nr. 7.)—
- [10] The third chapter is entitled "Das religiöse Wesen"; it is not entitled "Das Wesen der Religion," one of the reasons for this being that the essence of religion, that which is common to all religions, is not or should not be of any concern to us. The chapter considers religion with a view to the human soul and its boundaries, to the whole history of the soul hitherto and its yet inexhausted possibilities: Nietzsche does not deal with unknown possibilities, although or because he deals with religion hitherto and the religion of the future. Aphorisms 46–52 are devoted to religion hitherto and 53–57 to the religion of the future. The rest of the chapter (aph. 58–62) transmits Nietzsche's appraisal of religion as a whole. In the section on religion hitherto he speaks first of Christianity (46–48), then of the Greeks (49), then again of Christianity (50–51) and finally of the Old Testament (52). "The religiosity of the old Greeks" and above all certain parts of "the Jewish 'Old Testament'" supply him with the standards by which he judges of Christianity; nowhere in the chapter does he speak of Christianity with the respect, the admiration, the veneration with which he speaks of the two pre-Christian phenomena. The aphorisms on the Old Greeks and on the Old Testament are obviously meant to interrupt the aphorisms devoted to Christianity; the two interrupting aphorisms are put at some distance from one another in order to imitate the distance or rather opposition between

what one may call Athens and Jerusalem. The aphorism on the Old Testament is immediately preceded by an aphorism devoted to the saint: there are no saints, no holy men in the Old Testament; the peculiarity of Old Testament theology in contradistinction especially to Greek theology is the conception, the creation of the holy God (cf. *Dawn of Morning* aph. 68). For Nietzsche "the great style" of (certain parts of) the Old Testament shows forth the greatness, not of God, but of what man once was: the holy God no less than the holy man are creatures of the human will to power.

- [11] Nietzsche's vindication of God is then atheistic, at least for the time being: the aphorism following that on the Old Testament begins with the question "Why atheism today?" There was a time when theism was possible or necessary. But in the meantime "God died" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Zarathustra's Prologue Nr. 3). This does not merely mean that men have ceased to believe in God, for men's unbelief does not destroy God's life or being. It does mean, however, that even while God lived he never was what the believers in him thought him to be, namely, deathless. Theism as it understood itself was therefore always wrong. Yet for a time it was true, i.e. powerful, life-giving. In speaking of how or why it lost its power, Nietzsche speaks here less of the reasons that swayed him than of the reasons advanced by some of his contemporaries, presumably his most competent contemporaries. Not a few of his better readers will justifiably think that those reasons verge on the frivolous. In particular it is not quite clear whether those reasons are directed against natural (rational) or revealed theology. Nevertheless the most powerful anti-theistic argument which Nietzsche sketches is directed against the possibility of a clear and unambiguous revelation, i.e. of God's "speaking" to man (cf. *Dawn of Morning* aph. 91 and 95). Despite the decay of European theism Nietzsche has the impression that the religious instinct—"religiosity" as distinguished from "religion"—is growing powerfully at present or that atheism is only a transitional phase. Could atheism belong to the free mind as Nietzsche conceives of it while a certain kind of non-atheism belongs to the philosopher of the future who will again worship the god Dionysos or will again be, as an Epicurean might say, a *dionysokolax* (cf. aph. 7)? This ambiguity is essential to Nietzsche's thought; without it his doctrine would lose its character of an experiment or a temptation.
- [12] Nietzsche provisionally illustrates his suggestion of an atheistic or, if you wish, non-theistic religiosity by the alleged fact that the whole modern philosophy was anti-Christian but not anti-religious—that it could seem to point to something reminding of the Vedanta philosophy. But he does not anticipate, he surely does not wish, that the religion of the future will be something like the Vedanta philosophy. He anticipates a more Western, a sterner, more terrible and more invigorating possibility: the sacrificing from cruelty, i.e. from the will to power turning against itself, of God which prepares the worshipping of the stone, stupidity, heaviness (gravity), fate,

the Nothing. He anticipates in other words that the better among the contemporary atheists will come to know what they are doing—"the stone" may remind us of Anaxagoras' debunking of the sun—that they will come to realize that there is something infinitely more terrible, depressing and degrading in the offing than the *foeda religio* or *l'infâme*: the possibility, nay, the fact that human life is utterly meaningless and lacking support, that it lasts only for a minute which is preceded and followed by an infinite time during which the human race was not and will not be. (Cf. the beginning of "On truth and lie in an extra-moral sense.") These religious atheists, this new breed of atheists cannot be deceptively and deceivingly appeased as people like Engels by the prospect of a most glorious future, of the realm of freedom, which will indeed be terminated by the annihilation of the human race and therewith of all meaning but which will last for a very long time—for a millennium or more—, for fortunately we find ourselves still on "the ascending branch of human history" (F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der deutschen klassischen Philosophie*): the realm of freedom, destined to perish, necessarily contains within itself the seeds of its annihilation and will therefore, while it lasts, abound in "contradictions" as much as any earlier age.

- [13] Nietzsche does not mean to sacrifice God for the sake of the Nothing, for while recognizing the deadly truth that God died he aims at transforming it into a life-inspiring one or rather to discover in the depth of the deadly truth its opposite. Sacrificing God for the sake of the Nothing would be an extreme form of world-denial or of pessimism. But Nietzsche, prompted by "some enigmatic desire," has tried for a long time to penetrate pessimism to its depth and in particular to free it from the delusion of morality which in a way contradicts its world-denying tendency. He thus has grasped a more world-denying way of thinking than that of any previous pessimist. Yet a man who has taken this road has perhaps without intending to do this opened his eyes to the opposite ideal—to the ideal belonging to the religion of the future. It goes without saying that what in some other men was "perhaps" the case was a fact in Nietzsche's thought and life. The adoration of the Nothing proves to be the indispensable transition from every kind of world-denial to the most unbounded Yes: the eternal Yes-saying to everything that was and is. By saying Yes to everything that was and is Nietzsche may seem to reveal himself as radically antirevolutionary or conservative beyond the wildest wishes of all other conservatives, who all say No to some of the things that were or are. Remembering Nietzsche's strictures against "ideals" and "idealists" we are reminded of Goethe's words to Eckermann (November 24, 1824) according to which "everything idea-like (*jedes Ideale*) is serviceable for revolutionary purposes." Be this as it may, "And this," Nietzsche concludes his suggestion regarding eternal repetition of what was and is, "would not be *circulus vitiosus deus*?" As this concluding

ambiguous question again shows, his atheism is not unambiguous, for he had doubts whether there can be a world, any world whose center is not God (aph. 150). The conclusion of the present aphorism reminds us, through its form, of the theological aphorism occurring in the first two chapters (37) where Nietzsche brings out the fact that in a manner the doctrine of the will to power is a vindication of God, if a decidedly non-theistic vindication of God.

- [14] But now we are confronted with the fact that the vindication of God is only the inversion of the sacrificing of God to stupidity, to the Nothing, or at any rate presupposes that sacrificing. What is it that suddenly, if after a long preparation, divinizes the Nothing? Is it the willing of eternity which gives to the world, or restores to it, its worth which the world-denying ways of thinking had denied it? Is it the willing of eternity that makes atheism religious? Is beloved eternity divine merely because it is beloved? If we were to say that it must be in itself lovable, in order to deserve to be loved, would we not become guilty of a relapse into Platonism, into the teaching of "the good in itself"? But can we avoid such a relapse altogether? For the eternal to which Nietzsche says Yes, is not the stone, the stupidity, the Nothing which even if eternal or sempiternal cannot arouse an enthusiastic, life-inspiring Yes. The transformation of the world-denying way of thinking into the opposite ideal is connected with the realization or divination that the stone, the stupidity or the Nothing to which God is being sacrificed, is in its "intelligible character" the will to power (cf. aph. 36).
- [15] There is an important ingredient, not to say the nerve, of Nietzsche's "theology" of which I have not spoken and shall not speak since I have no access to it. It has been worthily treated by Karl Reinhardt in his essay "Nietzsche's Klage der Ariadne" (*Vermächtnis der Antike*, Göttingen 1960, 310–333; see also a remark of Reinhardt at the end of his eulogy of Walter F. Otto, *ib.* 379).—
- [16] It is possible but not likely that the "Sayings and Interludes" of which the fourth chapter consists, possesses no order, that there is no rhyme or reason to their selection and sequence. I must leave matters at a few observations
- [17] which are perhaps helpful to some of us.
- The opening aphorism draws our attention to the paramountcy of being-oneself, of being for oneself, of "preserving" oneself (cf. aph. 41). Accordingly knowledge cannot be, or cannot be good, for its own sake; it is justifiable only as self-knowledge: being oneself means being honest with oneself, going the way to one's own ideal. This seems to have atheistic implications. There occur in the chapter nine references to God; only one of them points to Nietzsche's own theology (150). There occurs only a single reference to nature (126). Instead we are confronted by nine aphorisms devoted to woman and man. Surely the knower whom Nietzsche has in mind has not, like Kant, the starred heaven above himself. As a consequence he

has a high morality, a morality beyond good and evil and in particular beyond puritanism and asceticism. Precisely because he is concerned with the freedom of his mind, he must imprison his heart (87, 107). Freedom of one's mind is not possible without a dash of stupidity (9). Self-knowledge is not only very difficult but impossible to achieve; man could not live with perfect self-knowledge (80–81, 231, 249).—

[18] The fifth chapter—the central chapter—is the only one whose heading (“Toward the natural history of morality”) refers to nature. Could nature be the theme of this chapter or even of the whole second part of the book?

[19] Nature—to say nothing of “naturalists,” “physics” and “physiology”—had been mentioned more than once in the first four chapters. Let us cast a glance at the most important or striking of those mentions. In discussing and rejecting the Stoic imperative “to live according to nature” Nietzsche makes a distinction between nature and life (9; cf. 49), just as on another occasion he makes a distinction between nature and “us” (human beings) (22). The opposite of life is death which is or may be no less natural than life. The opposite of the natural is the unnatural: the artificial, the domesticated, the misbegotten (62), the anti-natural (21, 51, 55); i.e., the unnatural may very well be alive.

[20] In the introductory aphorism (186) Nietzsche speaks of the desideratum of a natural history of morality in a manner which reminds us of what he had said in the introductory aphorism of the chapter on religion (45). But in the earlier case he led us to suspect that the true science of religion, i.e. the empirical psychology of religion, is for all practical purposes impossible, for the psychologist would have to be familiar with the religious experience of the most profound *homines religiosi* and at the same time to be able to look down, from above, on these experiences. Yet when stating the case for an empirical study, a description, of the various moralities Nietzsche states at the same time the case against the possibility of a philosophic ethics, a science of morals which teaches the only true morality. It would seem that he makes higher demands on the student of religion than on the student of morality. This is perhaps the reason why he did not entitle the third chapter “The natural history of religion”: Hume had written an essay entitled “The Natural History of Religion.”

[21] The philosophers' science of morals claimed to have discovered the foundation of morals either in nature or in reason. Apart from all other defects of that pretended science it rests on the gratuitous assumption that morality must or can be natural (according to nature) or rational. Yet every morality is based on some tyranny against nature as well as against reason. Nietzsche directs his criticism especially against the anarchists who oppose every subjection to arbitrary laws: everything of value, every freedom arises from a compulsion of long duration that was exerted by arbitrary, unreasonable laws; it was that compulsion that has educated the mind to freedom. Over against the ruinous permissiveness of anarchism Nietzsche asserts that

precisely long lasting obedience to unnatural and unreasonable *nomoi* is “the moral imperative of nature.” *Physis* calls for *nomoi* while preserving the distinction, nay, opposition of *physis* and *nomos*. Throughout this aphorism (188) Nietzsche speaks of nature only in quotation marks except in one case, in the final mention of nature; nature, and not only nature as the anarchists understand it, has become a problem for Nietzsche and yet he cannot do without nature.

[22] As for rationalist morality, it consists primarily in the identification of the good with the useful and pleasant and hence in the calculation of consequences; it is utilitarian. Its classic is the plebeian Socrates. How the patrician Plato—“the most beautiful growth of antiquity” (Preface), whose strength and power was the greatest which hitherto a philosopher had at his disposal—could take over the Socratic teaching is a riddle; the Platonic Socrates is a monstrosity. Nietzsche intends then to overcome Plato not only by substituting his truth for Plato's but also by surpassing him in strength or power. Among other things “Plato is boring” (*Twilight of the Gods*, ‘What I owe to the Ancients’ nr. 2), while Nietzsche surely is never boring. Both Socrates and Plato are guided by, or follow, not only reason but instinct as well; the instinct is more fundamental than reason. By explicitly taking the side of instinct against reason Nietzsche tacitly agrees with Rousseau (cf. *Natural Right and History* 262 n.). Instinct is, to say the least, akin to nature—to that which one may expel with a hayfork but will nevertheless always come back (cf. aph. 264; cf. the italicized heading of aph. 83, the first of the four italicized headings in chapter four). We are entitled to surmise that the fundamental instinct is the will to power and not, say, the urge toward self-preservation (cf. aph. 13). What we ventured to call Nietzsche's religiosity, is also an instinct (aph. 53): “The religious, that is to say god-forming instinct” (*Will to Power* nr. 1038). As a consequence of the irrationality of the moral judgement, of the decisive presence of the irrational in the moral judgement, there cannot be any universally valid moral rules: different moralities fit, belong to, different types of human beings.

[23] When Nietzsche speaks again of nature, supplying the term again with quotation marks (aph. 197), he demands that one cease to regard as morbid (as defectively natural) the predatory beings which are dangerous, intemperate, passionate, “tropical”: it was precisely the defective nature of almost all moralists—not reason and not nature simply—, namely, their timidity which induced them to conceive of the dangerous brutes and men as morbid. These moralists did not originate the morality stemming from timidity; that morality is the morality of the human herd, i.e. of the large majority of men. The utmost one could say is that the moral philosophers (and theologians) tried to protect the individual against the dangers with which he is threatened, not by other men, but by his own passions.

[24] Nietzsche speaks of the herd-instinct of obedience which is now almost universally innate and transmitted by inheritance. It goes without saying

that originally, in pre-historic times, that instinct was acquired (cf. *Genealogy of Morals* II). While it was very powerful throughout history, it has become simply predominant in contemporary Europe where it destroys at least the good conscience of those who command and are independent and where it successfully claims to be the only true morality. More precisely, in its earlier, healthy form it implied already that the sole standard of goodness is utility for the herd, i.e. for the common good; independence, superiority, inequality were esteemed to the extent to which they were thought to be subservient to the common good and indispensable for it, and not for their own sake. The common good was understood as the good of a particular society or tribe; it demanded therefore hostility to the tribe's external and internal enemies and in particular to the criminals. When the herd morality draws its ultimate consequences as it does in contemporary Europe, it takes the side of the very criminals and becomes afraid of inflicting punishment; it is satisfied with making the criminals harmless; by abolishing the only remaining ground of fear, the morality of timidity would reach its completion and thus make itself superfluous (cf. aph. 73). Timidity and the abolition of fear are justified by the identification of goodness with indiscriminate compassion.

- [25] Prior to the victory of the democratic movement to which, as Nietzsche understands it, also the anarchists and socialists belong, moralities other and higher than the herd morality were at least known. He mentions with high praise Napoleon and, above all, Alcibiades and Caesar. He could not have shown his freedom from the herd morality more tellingly than by mentioning in one breath Caesar and Alcibiades. Caesar could be said to have performed a great, historic function for Rome and to have dedicated himself to that function—to have been, as it were, a functionary of Roman history, but for Alcibiades Athens was no more than the pedestal, exchangeable if need be with Sparta or Persia, for his own glory or greatness. Nietzsche opposes men of such a nature to men of the opposite nature (aph. 199–200). In the rest of the chapter he speaks no longer of nature. Instead he expresses the view that man must be counted literally among the brutes (aph. 202). He appeals from the victorious herd morality of contemporary Europe to the superior morality of leaders (*Führer*). The leaders who can counteract the degradation of man which has led to the autonomy of the herd, can however not be merely men born to rule like Napoleon, Alcibiades and Caesar. They must be philosophers, new philosophers, a new kind of philosophers and commanders, the philosophers of the future. Mere Caesars, however great, will not suffice, for the new philosophers must teach man the future of man as his will, as dependent on a human will in order to put an end to the gruesome rule of nonsense and chance which was hitherto regarded as "history": the true history—as distinguished from the mere pre-history, to use a Marxian distinction—requires the subjugation of chance, of nature

(*Genealogy* II. n. 2) by men of the highest spirituality, of the greatest reason. The subjugation of nature depends then decisively on men who possess a certain nature. Philosophy, we have heard, is the most spiritual will to power (aph. 9): the philosophers of the future must possess that will to a degree which was not even dreamed of by the philosophy of the past; they must possess that will in its absolute form. The new philosophers are or act, we are tempted to say, to the highest degree according to nature. They are or act also to the highest degree according to reason, for they put an end to the rule of unreason, and the high—the high independent spirituality, the will to stand alone, the great reason (aph. 201)—is evidently preferable to the low. The turn from the autonomy of the herd to the rule of the philosophers of the future is akin to the transformation of the worshipping of the nothing into the unbounded Yes to everything that was and is; that transformation would then also be evidently reasonable.

- [26] But what becomes then of the irrationality of the moral judgement, i.e. of every moral judgement (aph. 191)? Or does it cease to be rational merely because one must be strong, healthy and well-born in order to agree to it or even to understand it? Yet can one say that Nietzsche's praise of cruelty, as distinguished from Plato's praise of gentleness, is rational? Or is that praise of cruelty only the indispensable and therefore reasonable corrective to the irrational glorification of compassion (cf. *Genealogy*, preface, nr. 5 end)? Furthermore, is not Nietzsche's critique of Plato and of Socrates a grave exaggeration, not to say a caricature? It suffices to remember the difference between the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias* in order to see that Socrates was not a utilitarian in Nietzsche's sense (cf. aph. 190). As Nietzsche says in the same chapter (202), Socrates did not think that he knew what good and evil is. In other words, "virtue is knowledge" is a riddle rather than a solution. Socrates' enigmatic saying is based on awareness of the fact that sometimes "a scientific head is placed on the body of an ape, a subtle exceptional understanding on a vulgar soul" (aph. 26); it implies awareness of the complexity of the relation between *Wissen* and *Gewissen*, to use a favorite distinction of Nietzsche which in this form is indeed alien to Socrates. To considerations such as these one is compelled to retort that for Nietzsche there cannot be a natural or rational morality because he denies that there is a nature of man: the denial of any cardinal difference between man and brute is a truth, if a deadly truth; hence there cannot be natural ends of man as man: all values are human creations.

- [27] While Nietzsche's turn from the autonomous herd to the new philosophers is in perfect agreement with his doctrine of the will to power, it seems to be irreconcilable with his doctrine of eternal return: how indeed can the demand for something absolutely new, this intransigent farewell to the whole past, to all "history" be reconciled with the unbounded Yes to everything that was and is? Toward the end of the present chapter Nietzsche



gives a hint regarding the connection between the demand for wholly new philosophers and eternal return; the philosophers of the future, he says, must be able to endure the weight of the responsibility for the future of man. He had originally published his suggestion regarding eternal return under the heading "*Das grösste Schwergewicht*" (*Gay Science* aph. 341).

[28] From the desideration of the new philosophers Nietzsche is naturally led to passing judgement on the contemporary philosophers, a sorry lot, who are not philosophers in a serious and proper sense but professors of philosophy, philosophic laborers or, as they came to call themselves after Nietzsche's death, men who "do philosophy." They are in the best case, i.e. only in rare cases, scholars or scientists, i.e. competent and honest specialists who of right ought to be subservient to philosophy or handmaidens to philosophy. The chapter devoted to this kind of man is entitled "*Wir Gelehrten*"; it is the only one in whose title the first person of the personal pronoun is used: Nietzsche wishes to emphasize the fact that apart from being a precursor of the philosophers of the future, he belongs to the scholars and not, for instance, to the poets or the *homines religiosi*. The emancipation of the scholars or scientists from philosophy is according to him only a part of the democratic movement, i.e. of the emancipation of the low from subordination to the high. The things which we have observed in the 20th century regarding the sciences of man confirm Nietzsche's diagnosis.

[29] The plebeian character of the contemporary scholar or scientist is due to the fact that he has no reverence for himself and this in its turn is due to his lack of self, to his self-forgetting, the necessary consequence or cause of his objectivity; hence he is no longer "nature" or "natural"; he can only be "genuine" or "authentic." Originally, one can say with some exaggeration, the natural and the genuine were the same (cf. Plato, *Laws* 642c 8-d 1, 777d 5-6; Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social* I. 9 end and II. 7, third paragraph); Nietzsche prepares decisively the replacement of the natural by the authentic. That he does this and why he does this will perhaps become clear from the following consideration. He is concerned more immediately with the classical scholars and historians than with the natural scientists (cf. aph. 209). Historical study had come to be closer to philosophy and therefore also a greater danger to it than natural science. This in turn was a consequence of what one may call the historicization of philosophy, the alleged realization that truth is a function of time (historical epoch) or that every philosophy belongs to a definite time and place (country). History takes the place of nature as a consequence of the fact that the natural—e.g. the natural gifts which enable a man to become a philosopher—is no longer understood as given but as the acquisition of former generations (aph. 213; cf. *Dawn of Morning* aph. 540). Historicism is the child of the peculiarly modern tendency to understand everything in terms of its genesis, of its human produc-

tion: nature furnishes only the almost worthless materials as in themselves (Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* II sect. 43).

[30] The philosopher, as distinguished from the scholar or scientist, is the complementary man in whom not only man but the rest of existence is justified (cf. aph. 207); he is the peak which does not permit and still less demand to be overcome. This characterization applies, however, strictly speaking only to the philosophers of the future compared with whom men of the rank of Kant and Hegel are only philosophic laborers, for the philosopher in the precise sense creates values. Nietzsche raises the question whether there ever were such philosophers (aph. 211 end). He seems to have answered that question in the affirmative by what he had said near the beginning of the sixth chapter on Heraclitus, Plato and Empedocles. Or does it remain true that we must overcome also the Greeks (*The Gay Science* aph. 125, 340)? The philosopher as philosopher belongs to the future and was therefore at all times in contradiction to his Today; the philosophers were always the bad conscience of their time. They belonged then to their time, not indeed, as Hegel thought, by being the sons of their times (*Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, Einleitung*, ed. Hoffmeister, 149) but by being their step-sons (*Schopenhauer als Erzieher* nr. 3). As belonging to their time and their place or country if only as their step-sons, the precursors of the philosophers of the future are concerned not only with the excellence of man in general but with the preservation of Europe which is threatened by Russia and which therefore must become a united Europe (aph. 208): the philosophers of the future must become the invisible spiritual rulers of a united Europe without ever becoming its servants.

[31] In the seventh chapter Nietzsche turns to "our virtues." Yet the "we" whose virtues he discusses there, are not "we scholars" but "we Europeans of the time after tomorrow, we firstlings of the 20th century" (aph. 214), "we free minds" (aph. 227), i.e. the precursors of the philosophers of the future. The discussion of the virtues and vices of the scholars must be supplemented by a discussion of the virtues and vices of free minds. The virtues of the free minds had been discussed in the second chapter but their vices which are inseparable from their virtues, must also be laid bare. "Our" morality is characterized by a fundamental ambiguity; it is inspired by Christianity and by anti-Christianity. One can say that "our" morality constitutes a progress beyond the morality of the preceding generations but this change is no ground for pride; such pride would be incompatible with "our" increased delicacy in moral matters. Nietzsche is willing to grant that a high spirituality (intellectuality) is the ultimate product of moral qualities, that it is the synthesis of all those states which one ascribes to men who are "only moral," that it consists in the spiritualization of justice and of that kind of severity which knows that it is commissioned to maintain in the world the order of rank, even among the things and not only among men. Being the

complementary man in whom the rest of existence is justified (aph. 207), standing on the summit, nay, being the summit, the philosopher has a cosmic responsibility. But "our virtues" are not the virtues of the philosopher of the future. The concession which Nietzsche makes to the men who are "only moral" does not prevent him from treating both the reigning moral teachings (altruism, the identification of goodness with compassion, utilitarianism) as well as their critique by moralists as trivial, not to say with contempt; the superior morality which flows from that critique or which is its presupposition does not belong to "our virtues." The reigning moralities are unaware of the problematic character of morality as such and this is due to their insufficient awareness of the variety of moralities (cf. aph. 186), to these moralists' lack of historical sense. The historical sense is "our" virtue, even "our great virtue." It is a novel phenomenon, not older than the 19th century. It is an ambiguous phenomenon. Its root is a lack of self-sufficiency of plebian Europe, or it expresses the self-criticism of modernity, its longing for something different, for something past or alien. As a consequence, "measure is foreign to us; we are titillated by the infinite and unmeasured"; hence we are half-barbarians. It would seem that this defect, the reverse side of our great virtue, points to a way of thinking and living that transcends historicism, to a peak higher than all earlier peaks. The discussion of the historical sense (aph. 223–24) is surrounded by a discussion of compassion (aph. 222 and 225): the historical sense mediates in a manner between the plebian morality which boasts of its compassion with those who have been neglected by nature (aph. 219) and which is bent on the abolition of all suffering, and the opposite morality which goes together with awareness of the great things man owes to suffering (aph. 225). The next aphorism (226) is the only one in the chapter with an italicized heading ("We immoralists"): we immoralists are "men of duty"; "our" immoralism is our virtue. "Our virtue which alone is left to us" is probity, intellectual probity; it is, one may say, the positive or reverse side of our immoralism. Probity includes and completes "our great virtue of the historical sense." Yet probity is an end rather than a beginning; it points to the past rather than to the future; it is not the virtue characteristic of the philosophers of the future; it must be supported, modified, fortified by "our most delicate, most disguised, most spiritual will to power" which is directed toward the future. Surely our probity must not be permitted to become the ground or object of our pride, for this would lead us back to moralism (and to theism).

- [32] For a better understanding of "our virtue" it is helpful to contrast it with the most powerful antagonist, the morality preached up by the English utilitarians which accepts indeed egoism as the basis of morality but contends that egoism rightly understood leads to the espousal of the general welfare. That utilitarianism is disgusting, boring and naive. While it recog-

nizes the fundamental character of egoism, it does not realize the fact that egoism is will to power and hence includes cruelty which, as cruelty directed toward oneself, is effective in intellectual probity, in "the intellectual conscience."

- [33] To recognize the crucial importance of cruelty is indispensable if "the terrible basic text *homo natura*," "that eternal basic text" is again to be seen, if man is to be "re-translated into nature." That re-translation is altogether a task for the future: "there never was yet a natural humanity" (*Will to Power* nr. 120). Man must be "made natural" (*vernaturlicht*) together "with the pure, newly found, newly redeemed nature" (*The Gay Science* aph. 109). For a man is the not yet fixed, not yet established beast (aph. 62): man becomes natural by acquiring his final, fixed character. For the nature of a being is its end, its completed state, its peak (Aristotle, *Politics* 1252b 32–34). "I too speak of 'return to nature,' although it is properly not a-going back but an ascent—up into the high, free, even terrible nature and naturalness . . ." (*Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an untimely man' nr. 48). Man reaches his peak through and in the philosopher of the future as the truly complementary man in whom not only man but the rest of existence is justified (aph. 207). He is the first man who consciously creates values on the basis of the understanding of the will to power as the fundamental phenomenon. His action constitutes the highest form of the most spiritual will to power and therewith the highest form of the will to power. By this action he puts an end to the rule of non-sense and chance (aph. 203). As the act of the highest form of man's will to power the *Vernaturlichung* of man is at the same time the peak of the anthropomorphization of the non-human (cf. *Will to Power* nr. 614), for the most spiritual will to power consists in prescribing to nature what or how it ought to be (aph. 9). It is in this way that Nietzsche abolishes the difference between the world of appearance or fiction (the interpretations) and the true world (the text). (Cf. Marx 'Nationalökonomie und Philosophie', *Die Frühschriften*, ed. Landshut, pp. 235, 237, 273.)
- [34] It is however the history of man hitherto, i.e. the rule of non-sense and chance, which is the necessary condition for the subjugation of non-sense and chance. That is to say, the *Vernaturlichung* of man presupposes and brings to its conclusion the whole historical process—a completion which is by no means necessary but requires a new, free creative act. Still, in this way history can be said to be integrated into nature. Be this as it may, man cannot say Yes to the philosophers of the future without saying Yes to the past. Yet there is a great difference between this Yes and the unbounded Yes to everything that was and is, i.e. the affirmation of eternal return.
- [35] Instead of explaining why it is necessary to affirm the eternal return, Nietzsche indicates that the highest achievement, as all earlier high achievements, is in the last analysis not the work of reason but of nature; in the last



analysis all thought depends on something unteachable "deep down," on a fundamental stupidity; the nature of the individual, the individual nature, not evident and universally valid insights, it seems, is the ground of all worthwhile understanding or knowledge (aph. 231; cf. aph. 8). There is an order of rank of the natures; at the summit of the hierarchy is the complementary man. His supremacy is shown by the fact that he solves the highest, the most difficult problem. As we have observed, for Nietzsche nature has become a problem and yet he cannot do without nature. Nature, we may say, has become a problem owing to the fact that man is conquering nature and there are no assignable limits to that conquest. As a consequence, people have come to think of abolishing suffering and inequality. Yet suffering and inequality are the prerequisites of human greatness (aph. 239 and 257). Hitherto suffering and inequality have been taken for granted, as "given," as imposed on man. Henceforth, they must be willed. That is to say, the gruesome rule of non-sense and chance, nature, the fact that almost all men are fragments, cripples and gruesome accidents, the whole present and past is itself a fragment, a riddle, a gruesome accident unless it is willed as a bridge to the future (cf. *Zarathustra*, 'Of Redemption'). While paving the way for the complementary man, one must at the same time say unbounded Yes to the fragments and cripples. Nature, the eternity of nature, owes its being to a postulation, to an act of the will to power on the part of the highest nature.

[36] At the end of the seventh chapter Nietzsche discusses "woman and man" (cf. aph. 237). The apparently clumsy transition to that subject—a transition in which he questions the truth of what he is about to say by claiming that it expresses merely his "fundamental stupidity deep down"—is not merely a flattery, a gesture of courtesy to the friends of woman's emancipation. It indicates that he is about to continue the theme of nature, i.e. the natural hierarchy, in full awareness of the problem of nature.

[37] The philosophers of the future may belong to a united Europe but Europe is still *l'Europe des nations et des patries*. Germany more than any other part of non-Russian Europe has more of a prospect of a future than, say, France or England (aph. 240, 251, 255; cf. Heine ed. Elster IV 510). One could find that Nietzsche stresses in his chapter on peoples and fatherlands more the defects of contemporary Germany than her virtues: it is not so difficult to free one's heart from a victorious fatherland as from a beaten one (aph. 41). The target of his critique here is not German philosophy but German music, i.e. Richard Wagner. More precisely, European nobility reveals itself as the work and invention of France, whereas European commonness, the plebianism of the modern ideas, is the work and invention of England (aph. 253).

[38] Nietzsche thus prepares the last chapter which he entitled "*Was ist vornehm?*" "Vornehm" differs from "noble" because it is inseparable from

extraction, origin, birth (*Dawn of Morning*, aph. 199; Goethe *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* [*Sämliche Werke*, Tempel-Klassiker, II 87–88] and *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Vol. 2, ed. cit. 44–45). Being the last chapter of a prelude to a philosophy of the future, it shows the (a) philosophy of the future as reflected in the medium of conduct, of life; thus reflected the philosophy of the future reveals itself as the philosophy of the future. The virtues of the philosopher of the future differ from the Platonic virtues: Nietzsche replaces temperance and justice by compassion and solitude (aph. 284). This is one illustration among many of what he means by characterizing nature by its "Vornehmheit" (aph. 188). *Die vornehme Natur ersetzt die göttliche Natur*.